them, the few educated people of the community should be appointed to such posts as they were qualified for. There were some graduates of both sexes and a few, with English or Vernacular School Leaving Certificates, in the community, who had been trying in vain for the past few years, to enter the public service. Those people should be provided with suitable posts. The appointment of two or three Co-operative Inspectors from the fishing community would help the spread of the movement among the coastal people. Without better representation in the public service, the political and general status of the community would always be very low.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Netto. The main point in your representation is about the provision of a net work of communications along the coast where live the fisher folk. That, I may tell you, is a matter which has already attracted the attention of the Government. Proposals have been called for from the Public Works Department in connection with the question of opening a road along the coast and the scheme will be taken up for being worked out as financial conditions permit.

Nomination of members of the several communities to public bodies cannot be guided by the same considerations always. You mentioned the Popular Assembly, the Legislative Council and the Economic Development Board. Each of these stands on a different footing. The Economic Development Board, for instance, is to be treated mainly as an assembly of experts who would be able to give useful and helpful advice to Government in matters relating to the economic development of the country. I do not think that it will be proper to treat that as a body where every community should have representation. The angle from which that institution has to be looked at seems to me to be quite different. If Government find that there are persons of your community or any other community who are likely to be able to give helpful advice in matters of economic development to the State, Government will certainly consider the question of their appointment also on the Board.

The question of the supply of good drinking water to people in the coastal villages where water is scarce has also been taken up by the Government and they have chalked out a line of action which they are trying to follow year after year. It is not possible to supply all these villages with good drinking water and proper sources of drinking water in one year. Government are therefore setting apart an amount every year for sinking a prescribed number of wells in these areas. They are being taken up in the order of urgency and the need for these wells.

There are a number of other useful suggestions also which you have made and they will all receive the consideration of Government.

153. Arayas and their disabilities.

SREEMATHI CODIVEETIL C. RUDRANI (*Nominated*): speaking in Malayalam, first gave expression to the feelings of loyalty and devotion to Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent for removing

the sex disqualification in the matter of franchise and membership of the Assembly and for nominating for the first time five lady members. She also requested the Dewan to convey to Her Highness the feelings of devoted loyalty and gratitude of her community for nominating a woman member to represent the Arayas.

Passing on to her subject, the member said that by the term Araya she meant the people who inhabited the sea and back-water coasts, engaged in fishing industry, variously called as Arayans, Valans, Nulayans, Mukkavars, etc. In population, they numbered nearly two lakhs. In ancient days the Arayas occupied an enviable position in the country, enjoying the great confidence of the Royal Family. But now they had degenerated much. Their economic condition was quite deplorable. They suffered from very great poverty. For want of capital to invest on fishing implements and accessories, the poor fisher-folk had to take loans from the contractors at a very high rate of interest. In most cases the money was lent on condition that the borrower would give all his fish to the creditor. The latter fixed the price of fish and the poor fisherman had to accept it. They suffered very great miseries and hardships at the hands of these capitalists. To make their condition worse, the Government had imposed an additional financial burden in the shape of minor fishery duties. With a view to remedy the hardships suffered by the poor fishermen, and to afford them some financial relief, the practice of selling the monopoly of river and backwater fishing to contractors should be discontinued and the levying of minor fishing duties should be abolished. If it was not possible to discontinue the practice of selling the monopoly of fishing rights, at least it should be provided that such rights should be sold only to those who were actually engaged in the industry. If the fishermen labourers could not afford to take up the contract for want of funds, it should be given to their co-operative societies. Further, the fishing industry should be brought within the scope of the State-aid-to-Industries Bill and fishery loans should be granted to those who were engaged in the industry.

Another remedy to better the condition of the community lay in registering the *puduval* lands on the sea and back water coasts, preferably to the poor landless fishermen labourers. Though that was the policy accepted by the Government in the matter, still some of the influential communities were trying to deprive them of the concession.

The community was quite backward in the matter of education. In spite of the fee concession granted to the pupils of the community, they were not able to make much progress. It was due to the poverty of the parents. There were only three graduates in the community and there was not a single woman graduate. The Government should pay special attention to encouraging education among the members of the community, especially female education. Full fee concession should be allowed to the pupils belonging to the community up to the School Final class, and scholarships should be awarded to those who desired to

go in for higher education. Female education should be specially encouraged by granting to the girl students of the community all the privileges now allowed to Muslim girls.

The member next urged the necessity for separating the Fishery branch from the Agricultural and Fisheries Department and placing it under an independent officer. Agriculture and fisheries formed the vocation of two different communities and hence could not be efficiently managed by one officer, however capable he was. It would be better if the head of the Fisheries Department was a member of the Araya community. One of the qualified Arayas should be selected and deputed to Japan, at the cost of Government, for technical training in the subject, with a view to be appointed as the head of the Fisheries Department.

The principle of communal representation in the matter of recruitment to public service should be accepted by the Government, and preferential treatment should be given to the members of the Araya community, which was under-represented in public service.

The working of the fishery schools in the State was not satisfactory. Their efficiency should be enhanced, even reducing their number, if necessary.

A committee should be appointed to investigate the economic condition of the Arayas, and to suggest remedial measures for improving it. The committee should have a non-official majority and should have at least two Araya representatives.

The name "Araya" should be adopted in all official records and correspondence and the use of the term "Mukkuvan" should be abandoned.

Lastly the member said that the community deserved adequate representation both in the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and that atleast one member should be nominated to represent them in the Legislative Council and two members in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. One member of the community should also be nominated to the Development Board.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Sreemathi Rudrani. I am going to reply in English. Like the first of your sisters who came upon this platform, you also began your representation with an expression of fear as to the effectiveness of the mode of your representation. Well, I must now confess that I have begun to look upon such statements with a certain degree of distrust. They look, from the way in which you and your sisters have acquitted themselves, more like traps for the unwary. It seems to me as if the object that you and your sisters have in view is to lull other people into a false sense of security under the impression that your representations are not going to be effective, strong or impressive. As I said, I am growing out of the habit of having any faith in representations of that kind ; for I must say, as I said in the case of that

first sister that I mentioned, that your representation, far from being wanting in force or effectiveness, is one of the most effective of the representations that I and those who are assembled at this session have listened to.

I shall gladly convey to Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent the expression of devoted loyalty that you voiced here both on your behalf and on behalf of your community for nominating women to the Assembly and nominating you to represent Arayas.

It will be useful for a community which is considered depressed or which considers itself depressed to have artificial aids to the resuscitation of its self-respect. And your eloquent delineation of certain incidents—historical incidents perhaps—which happened to this community serves to raise itself in its own self-esteem. I do not think that such adventitious aid is really necessary, because, there cannot be anything more creditable to a community than that very few of its members have to live by what might be called charity. In one sense, a community, almost all of whose members do live by the work of their hands, has just reason to be proud of itself and to hold itself in high self-esteem. When you say therefore that it is very rarely that members of your community can be seen begging, it is a fact of which the community may well be proud. I remember what was said the other evening at the *Sadhujanaparipalana Sangham* Conference held in this very hall, that one of the creditable things to be said about the Pulaya community was that very few of its members could be found begging. Such communities, as I told the members of the *Sangham*, have greater facilities, than others perhaps, to make progress in modern education, because we are now at the cross-roads and modern educationists are prepared to take the road which leads to technical more than literary education, to industrial training, more than academic learning. On that road, communities which have been accustomed to actual physical work are likely to have an advantage over other communities. Therefore your community might take consolation in that fact and might take all the pride that it needs to take by this fact, that it is a community of workers.

You made several practical suggestions to Government for improving the condition of the members of your community in their profession. The Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, I may assure you, is an officer who, I know, takes great interest in this part of his department's work *viz.*, fisheries. I do not know what greater interest is possible for an officer of that description to take even if he was a member of your community, because I know that Dr. Kunjan Pillai knows a great deal about this work, has studied much about it and is interested in doing whatever can be done to improve the condition of the community.

I do not propose to deal with each of the suggestions that you made, but I will assure you that all those suggestions will receive the best consideration of Government.